

Washington, DC -- On Tuesday, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7) informed his constituents that the House Appropriations Committee plans to reduce the dollar amount of earmarks in appropriations bills by 50 percent relative to the amounts planned in FY 2006. Earmarks are provisions inserted by a member of Congress into legislation without debate or hearings, usually to serve some special interest.

“Since 1996, we have seen an explosion in the number of earmarks from just over 3,000 in 1996 to over 13,000 in 2006, amounting to \$29 billion — some questionable — pork-barrel projects that year, according to one estimate,” noted Joe. “So it comes as no surprise that the Appropriations Committee this week announced plans to reduce the number of earmarks by 50 percent. I want to make sure my constituents know that I will still fight for the appropriate projects that serve their best interests and the nation. I recognize that the funding will be cut in half, but if we have the right justification and the process is fully open then that is fine.

“Additionally, I feel I have a responsibility to ensure the process is fully transparent so that Members can be held accountable to the public for their actions. If the project or earmark is worth it, let’s have the public know about it.”

On Joe’s first day, he supported changing the rules to reform the Earmark process, so that now:

- 1) There will be restrictions on certain bills, to require that lists of the earmarks provisions as well as the members who requested those earmarks will be provided prior to the consideration of the measure.
- 2) It also prevents the awarding or withholding of earmarks as a condition of a vote and requires members requesting earmarks to provide certain information to the committee of jurisdiction.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit

that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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